

The U.S. Geological Survey Seeks Better Ways of Providing Science on Behalf of our Communities by Forming the **Florida Integrated Science Center**

NEW LEADERSHIP IN SCIENCE

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is exercising national leadership in the natural sciences by integrating research studies carried out by its four disciplines: Geography, Geology, Hydrology, and Biology. This initiative is finding one of its first manifestations in Florida, where the four disciplines have begun integrated efforts to address high priority scientific needs. To facilitate integrated science, what were once three separate Florida-based units of the USGS have been united and will now be known as the Florida Integrated Science Center (FISC).

USGS PLAN TO PROVIDE BETTER SCIENCE TO THE NATION

The mission of the USGS Florida Integrated Science Center is to provide the science needed to support decision-making on natural resource issues for the people of Florida, the Southeastern States, the U.S. Caribbean, and the Nation. The FISC constituency consists of scientific peers, agency partners and clients, the lay public, and our elected representatives.

FISC goals are to build upon and expand USGS excellence in the natural sciences by:

- Realigning single-discipline Florida-based units to mix the disciplines;
- Sharing expertise and common services;
- Moving toward joint management of all FISC science programs;
- Trying innovative approaches that seek new scientific opportunities and better answers for critically important questions.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO OUR COMMUNITIES?

The components of the FISC will continue to be a good neighbors wherever they are located. The new organization will provide more broadly based comprehensive scientific assessments with results of greater value to natural resource managers. The combined talents of our four scientific disciplinary strengths are expected to result in more comprehensive and robust solutions to important issues and problems in natural resource management. Those who rely on our science can expect:

- Integrated science focused on solving complex environmental issues;
- Interdisciplinary teams that work with managers to develop strategies from the onset of a project;
- Multiple perspectives, methodologies, and conceptual models to enhance scientific outcomes;
- More broadly based scientific research.

As a Federal Center that is part of a nationwide natural scientific organization, the FISC has the opportunity to:

- Specialize in complex problems that may cross jurisdictions or other boundaries;
- Marshal expertise in ways that for-profit organizations or universities cannot;
- Provide long-term commitment to issues and tasks; and
- Integrate results of diverse studies to inform decision-making on regulatory and policy issues.

WHAT IS THE FLORIDA INTEGRATED SCIENCE CENTER (FISC)?

The USGS Florida Integrated Science Center includes three hubs, themselves known as “Centers”. These three hubs, associated offices, and field stations house various scientific teams, which balance the mix of long-term data collection and monitoring, research and development, environmental assessment, and interdisciplinary capabilities. The FISC umbrella provides a dynamic mechanism for guiding and coordinating scientific activities at the three component hubs and their 480 people. The component Centers are:

The **Center for Aquatic Resource Studies** is headquartered in Gainesville with associated offices located in Ocala, Orlando, and Tallahassee. The unique capabilities of this center focus on the relationship between water resources and the ecological communities they support.

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The **Center for Coastal and Watershed Studies** is headquartered in St. Petersburg, with an associated office in Tampa and a strategic field station on St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Special capabilities located at these sites support research studies on the marine and near shore environments and their connection with inland watersheds.

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The **Center for Water and Restoration Studies** is located in the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area. Hydrologic restoration studies are a major focus of research conducted by this center, with special emphasis on research and assessments needed to support restoration of the Everglades.

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FUTURE SCIENCE DIRECTIONS FOR FISC

The FISC will work to combine and enhance diverse programs, capabilities, and talents of the USGS in Florida. We will increase customer involvement, strengthen our interdisciplinary teams, and continue to address complex scientific questions with the goal providing information that will support sound decision-making. Our efforts to better marshal all the scientific and technical resources of USGS in Florida should not only improve how the USGS conducts business with its many partners, but will simultaneously improve the overall quality of the scientific products the USGS is capable of providing.

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